

10 date ideas to keep your love burning

You don't have to venture far for a little romance

by amanda dolter • photos by th media

Relationships require effort year-round, though it often is more difficult to muster the motivation for special activities or date nights during the winter. But even a small amount of alone time with your partner can make for a huge investment in your relationship.

According to Winifred M. Reilly, licensed marriage and family therapist and author of the relationship advice blog, "Speaking of Marriage," date night is not just for married people with kids or for those in struggling relationships. It's for everyone, "because couples in all states and stages need quality one-on-one time."

Quality time helps you re-connect as a couple, have fun together and, of course, is an opportunity to inspire love and romance. These one-on-one occasions don't need to be elaborate or expensive, but they should be enjoyable for both you and your partner.

Here are 10 ideas to keep your love burning this winter:

1 Strap on a pair of cross country skis or snowshoes to explore your favorite park or trail as a winter wonderland. If you don't have equipment, check out the daily rentals from Fever River Outfitters, Galena, Ill. Not only will you get some fresh air and exercise, but you also can curl up with each other afterward for a nice cozy nap.

2 Whether you like coffee, tea or hot toddies, winter is the perfect time to steam things up with an indulgent, warm drink. Take a walk together to your favorite café or find a new place to try. Dubuque has a variety of charming coffee establishments, such as Charlotte's Coffee House, Inspire Café, Jitterz, Monk's Kaffee Pub, Manna Java World Café and One Mean Bean, to name a few.

3 Are you ready to take Dubuque By Carriage? Slow things down and cuddle up with your sweetie for a horse-drawn carriage ride through the historic downtown district.

4 Gliding across the ice hand-in-hand is a picturesque romantic pastime. But if your skating skills are less than graceful, it's always fun to fall down together, too. Mystique Community Ice Center features an indoor ice rink and skate rentals. Or, visit Dubuque's outdoor skating rink at Allison Henderson Park, open daily from 9 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

5 BYOB and be creative with your partner. Pinot's Palette is a "Paint. Drink. Have Fun." destination, featuring two- to three-hour paint classes, as well as special date-night sessions. Or, give the pottery wheel a spin at Matter Creative Center's Pinot & Pottery class. These signature events take place every Friday evenings from 5 to 8 and allow those with IDs to bring adult beverages, as well as light snacks.



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6 Enjoy the sound of music together at Five Flags Center. This lovely Renaissance Revival theater is the perfect setting to enjoy a performance by the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra, which will present its Classics 3: Beautiful Brahms concerts in March.

7 Feel the rhythm of love by signing up for a group dance class or private lessons. Adam's Dance Connection LLC, specializes in Latin, swing, country, bridal and ballroom dances. The Ballroom Academy of Dubuque is a full-service ballroom dance studio offering beginning through advanced classes in social dance.

8 Stylish and sexy, a tastefully done boudoir photo makes a special gift for your special someone. Local professional photographers, such as The Joy of Photography, can help create a classy and alluring image in a comfortable and safe environment.

9 It's been said that the way to someone's heart is through their stomach. Private cooking lessons or a chef-prepared romantic dinner for two in your home is possible with Life's a Feast, a private chef and catering company serving the Dubuque area.

10 Consider an all-inclusive overnight stay at an area hotel. Hotel Julien Dubuque is a sophisticated boutique venue that combines historic charm with modern amenities including elegant accommodations, an onsite spa and fine dining. In nearby Galena, the Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa offers a secluded setting in the rolling hills of Northern Illinois, with an array of activities available and special packages that cater to couples, such as Love is in the Air and Romance for Two.

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